

Stratford Hall  
North End of State Route 214  
Stratford  
Westmoreland County  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-307

HABS  
VA

97- \_\_\_\_\_,  
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
VA

97-  
4-

STRATFORD  
Stratford, Westmoreland County, Virginia

Owner: Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation

Date of erection: c. 1725

Present condition: Good; restored

Description:

Brick, Flemish bond; one story above high basement; hipped roof; grouped ridge chimneys; plan H-shaped, giving courts on north and south elevations. Main approach from south by monumental flight of stone steps restored from evidence found at building. Doorway has simple, pedimented, gauged-brick trim. Ends of wings and court elevations three bays each; side elevations five bays, with central doors. All lower sash 8/8 lights; upper 16/16. Interior has fine paneled great hall. Most of the remaining woodwork is later or restoration work.

Reference: Waterman and Barrows, Domestic Colonial Architecture of Tidewater Virginia

*Thomas T. Waterman*

11/2/40

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

STRATFORD HALL

HABS No. VA-307

Location: State Route 214 approximately two miles from the intersection with State Route 3, Stratford, Westmoreland County, Virginia (Latitude W76° 50'23", Longitude N38° 09' 07")

Present Owner: Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc.

Present Use: Historic House Museum

Statement of Significance: Stratford Hall, an outstanding example of early Georgian domestic architecture, was built for Thomas Lee. Two of his sons, Richard Henry Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee, were signers of the Declaration of Independence. The son of General Henry Lee, Robert E. Lee, was born in the house in 1807.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Although definite records do not exist, it is traditionally acknowledged that construction was begun circa 1725. The house was probably occupied circa 1730. (Ethel Armes, Stratford Hall.)
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners:

1718-1751	Thomas Lee
1751-1775	Philip Ludwell Lee
1775-1780	Philip Ludwell Lee
1780-1789	Matilda and Flora Lee
1789-1790	Henry and Matilda Lee, Deed of Trust
1790-1818	General Henry Lee
1818-1822	Major Henry Lee
1822-1828	William Clarke Somerville
1828-1844	Henry D. Storke
1844-1879	Elizabeth McCarty Storke
1879-1882	Richard H. and Charles E. Stuart
1882-1903	Richard H. Stuart
1903-1904	Lydia Anna (Marmaduke) Stuart
1904-1919	Richard H. Stuart
1919-1929	Charles E. Stuart

1929- Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc.

(Adapted from Ethel Armes, Stratford Hall.)

4. Construction information: None known
5. Alterations and additions: The interior was redecorated circa 1800 with the installation of Federal style chimney pieces and trim in several main floor rooms. No construction information is known.

After acquiring the structure, the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc. employed architect Sidney Fiske Kimball for the restoration of the house which was contracted by Claiborne and Taylor. The restoration included major repairs to the roof, 1933-34; restoration of chimneys and platforms, 1936; restoration of interiors, 1934-38; construction of south stairway, 1935; restoration of exterior, 1937-38; and construction of north, east, and west stairways, 1940. (Wyrick: "Precis of the Restoration")

6. Important old views: Photo collections are available in the archives of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc. at Stratford and in the Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

B. Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Thomas Lee (1690-1751), for whom Stratford Hall was built, was a grandson of Richard Lee of Stratford-Langton, Essex, England, who came to Virginia and settled first in Gloucester County in 1644. As local Magistrate, member and President of the Governor's Council, and later acting Governor of the Colony, Thomas Lee, exerted considerable influence in the Virginia colony. He was married to Hannah Ludwell of Green Spring, and of his six sons, Richard Henry Lee (1732-1794) and Francis Lightfoot Lee (1734-1797) were both signers of the Declaration of Independence. Philip Ludwell Lee, who inherited Stratford Hall from his father in 1751 and who died in 1775, was a member of the House of Burgesses and a secretary of the Governor's Council. Stratford was acquired by his son General Henry (Lighthorse Harry) Lee (1756-1818) whose own son, Robert E. Lee, was born in the House in 1807. Major Henry Lee, who inherited Stratford in 1818, sold it in 1822. The property was acquired by the Henry D. Storckes in 1828. Mrs. Storck, a sister-in-law of Major Henry Lee, bequeathed the property to her husband's nephew, Dr. Richard H. Stuart. His son, Charles Edward Stuart sold Stratford Hall to the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Unpublished sources:

Kimball, Sidney Fiske, Papers MSS. Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Archives, Stratford, Virginia. (On permanent loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art.) Approximately 30,000 letters, 1930-1952, relating entirely to the restoration of Stratford Hall.

Wyrick, Connie H., "Precis of the Restoration of Stratford, 1929-1940." Richmond, 1968. Copies are filed in the archives of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Stratford, Virginia

2. Published sources, Lee Family:

Alexander, Frederick Warren, Stratford and the Lees Connected with Its History. Oak Grove, Virginia: F.W. Alexander, 1912.

Hendrick, Burton J., The Lees of Virginia. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1935.

Lee, Cazegrove Gardner, and edited by Dorothy Mills Parker, Lee Cronicle: Studies of the Early Generations of the Lees of Virginia. New York: New York University Press, 1957.

Lee, Edmund Jennings, Lees of Virginia, 1642-1892. Philadelphia: Franklin Printing Company, 1895.

Hoffman, Paul P. (ed.), Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Lee Family Papers, 1742-1795. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Library, 1966.

3. Published sources, Stratford Hall:

Kimball, Sidney Fiske, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and the Early Republic. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922.

Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Sale, Edith Tunis, Colonial Interiors, Second Series. New York: William Helburn, 1930, Plates 21 (stairway), 112 and 126 (chimney pieces).

Sale, Edith Tunis, Interiors of Virginia Houses of Colonial

Times. Richmond: William Byrd Press, Inc., 1927.

Armes, Ethel, Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees.  
Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1936.

Waterman, Thomas T. and John A. Barrows, Domestic Colonial  
Architecture of Tidewater Virginia. New York: Charles  
Scribner's Sons, 1932.

Waterman, Thomas T., The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776.  
Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1945.

Wyrick, Connie H., "Stratford and the Lees," Journal of the  
Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. XXX, No. 1 (March  
1971), pp. 71-90.

Prepared by: Melvin M. Rotsch, Architect  
Stratford Project Supervisor  
August 1969

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Nine-bay, two-story Stratford Hall, a fine example of an early eighteenth century plantation mansion, is outstanding for its H-plan and its two clusters of massive chimneys. The second, main floor, or piano nobile contains the great hall and other formal rooms.
2. Condition of the fabric: The house is in good condition, having been extensively restored in the 1930's and is well maintained.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 92'-6" x 62'-8"
2. Foundations: At the east wing, 28" thick English bond brick walls extend below the cellar floor. The east chimneys are supported on three brick barrel vaults. Elsewhere, the foundations, 28" in thickness, extended less than one foot below grade. During 1937 restoration work the foundations were underpinned with new brick work to a depth of not less than 18".

3. Wall construction, finish, and color: The perimeter walls and the two cross bearing walls are 24" in thickness at the ground floor level and 19" thick above the water table at the main floor level. The bricks, which are red-brown in color, are laid in Flemish bond throughout except at the foundations, below the ground floor level, which are English bond. Above the 2 1/2" projecting, 7 1/2" high watertable with its three courses of brick--one cavetto, one ovolo, and one regular course--the brick is rubbed at the corners and jambs. At the ground floor level the brick is laid with glazed headers and typically contains eight courses of 8 3/4" to 9" x 4" x 2 1/2" brick to 24". Above, the bricks are 8 3/4" x 4 1/2" and are laid with eight courses to 20".
4. Structural system: The exterior and interior masonry walls are bearing walls which support the wood floor structures which are inaccessible. The roof structure, however, is one of the few truss roofs of the early eighteenth century in America. Except for very minor damage due to fire near the east chimneys and the shoring and splicing of a few timbers, the roof and attic framing stand as originally constructed. The attic floor, or the ceiling of the main floor, of each wing is carried by four trusses, each having a 29'-0" clear span. Each king post is cut down from a 6" x 14" timber to provide haunches to receive the top members and the diagonal braces. The attic floor structure consists of 3" x 11" floor joists which are supported on diagonal 7" x 7 1/2" members similar to, and directly below, the roof hip rafters. Tie beams form trusses that support the tray ceiling of the Great Hall in the central section. The trusses and rafters rest on wall plates that are 8" x 24" in size. All joints are of mortise-and-tenon construction and are pinned with hardwood pegs. Truss timbers and rafters are poplar.
5. Stairways: The stairway of the central south elevation, apparently always the main facade, provides access from the ground level to the Great Hall. Prior to 1935 there was a straight flight of steps of brick construction with nosed treads of sandstone. There is some question as to the date this stairway was built. With limited evidence of a few unearthed fragments of stone balusters, lozenge shaped in section, architect S. Fiske Kimball designed the present stairway, splayed in plan, with stone balusters, one per tread, and carrying a stone rail on either side. Prior to 1940, there had been no exterior stair on the north elevation. At grade, below the north doorway of the Great Hall, there were excavated some fragmentary evidence of a terrace and a semi-circular balcony. The present stair on the north elevation

is a 1940 duplication of the south stair.

At the east elevations, there was a single-run exterior stairway of brick construction that rose from grade near the southeast corner up to the east passage doorway at the main floor. At the west elevation of the main floor, there was a small covered porch similar to the east entrance. Apparently there was no exterior access from this porch to grade. The present large, double, dog-leg type stairways of brick with segmental arches over the central doorways were the design of architect Kimball in 1940, who based the scheme on mortar marks on the walls of the house.

6. Chimneys: In the center of each east and west wing are four massive chimneys rising above the roof ridges. Each chimney stack provided flues for two fireplaces. The flues are capped. The corbeled and moulded brick caps of the chimneys were modified in the 1930's. Brick arches, a stretcher in depth support corbeling matching the caps and span between each stack which are laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers and rubbed brick corners. Above the ridges, platforms are set between the stacks which are infilled with railings having turned balusters.

7. Openings:

- a. Dorways and doors: The south and north doorways opening into the Great Hall of the main floor each have a pediment of moulded brick supported on piers of rubbed brickwork, a stretcher and header in width, and a flat arch, a stretcher and header in depth. Repair work was done on these openings with their double fascia architrave trim in 1938. Typically the backbands are a cyma recta profile. There were H-L hinge ghosts on each of the jambs, indicating the original use of pairs of doors. The jambs and interior trim were restored in 1934, and new doors designed by architect Kimball, were installed in 1938. Each leaf has four panels.

The east and west doorways of the main floor had semi-circular fanlights which were removed in 1938 and replaced with square headed, flat arched openings. The new doorways, without transoms, were hung with single doors designed by architect Kimball. Each door has four rectangular panels over four triangular panels within diagonal rails.

The east central and west doors of the ground floor have



segmentally arched openings. Each arch is a stretcher in depth. The paired doors have beaded vertical boarding on the exterior and three rectangular panels on each leaf on the interior. The east doors, apparently original, were repaired in 1937. The west doors were found stored in the northeast dependency and were repaired and reset in place.

The six smaller exterior doors opening onto the ground floor at the north and east elevations have segmentally arched openings, double fascia architrave trim, and six-panel doors. Some of the doorways had been brick-up and others had been converted into windows. All were restored to their original state.

- b. Windows and shutters: The window openings of the ground floor which have segmental arches a stretcher in depth have double fascia architrave trim. In the openings the upper sash is fixed while the lower sash is sliding, employing a sash-weight system which apparently dates from the original construction. Each sash has eight lights,  $7 \frac{3}{4} \times 9 \frac{5}{8}$  in size, and were installed in 1937-38 to match and replace the deteriorated original sash.

The window openings of the main floor have square heads; flat arches, a stretcher, closer and header in depth; maximum rubbed brick jambs with closers; double fascia architrave trim; and moulded sills similar to the ground floor window openings. The upper sash are fixed. Nine over nine light sash of the nineteenth century was replaced in 1934-38 with a sixteen over sixteen light sash similar in detail to the original ground floor sash. The lights are  $7 \frac{5}{8} \times 9 \frac{1}{8}$  in size. All the frames and trim are original and have been repaired.

During the restoration, the exterior louvered-blinds, probably dating from the nineteenth century, were removed, and the original interior shutters were repaired and restored. In the ground floor's east wing the interior shutters consist of one pair, with one panel in each leaf, in each opening. The shutters in the Middle Hall Room of the ground floor are similar. Those in the ground floor's west wing bi-fold at one jamb and have a single leaf at the opposite jamb. Both sets of leaves fold into the reveals. On the main floor all the shutters have four leaves which bi-fold into the reveals and have two panels in each outer leaf.

Prior to 1936 there were twenty-one light, rectangular sash at the east and west elevations of the chimney platforms. The sash of the openings, which light the attic space, were removed and replaced with semi-circular sash. In 1967 those sash were removed and replaced with six light sash.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: Pitched approximately 8 in 12, the roof is hipped. Almost all the 1" thick roof sheathing appears to be original and has square cut nails of earlier wood shingles exposed on the underside. Some repairs were made in the valleys and near the chimneys in 1933-34. At that time 30 pound asphalt roofing felt was laid and covered with Williamsburg-type Asbestos Composition shingles, laid with copper roofing nails. The chimney platforms, flashing, and valleys were finished with 16 ounce lead-coated copper.
- b. Cornice and eaves: The boxed-wood cornice, extensively repaired in the restoration of 1937-38, is 1'-4" in height and extends 1'-1" from the face of the walling. The profile consists of a cyma recta-cyma reversa crown moulding above a 3" fascia with a drip. Dentils support the soffit and are above an ovolo-cyma reversa bedmoulding.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The plan is an H-form and is rather unusual for eighteenth-century America. The space distribution is likewise unusual, having service and most of the sleeping quarters on the ground floor and the formal rooms on the main floor. The names and uses of the various rooms have been derived from inventories of 1758 and 1776, and are problematical. The conjectural nomenclature and location is as follows:

Ground Floor: The west wing, with its passage between the pairs of chimney breasts contains the Red Room, Green Room, and Blue Room, which were probably all used as bed chambers, and the County House or plantation office. The central section contains two north brick rooms which were used for storage, and the large Middle Hall Room which was perhaps originally subdivided. The east wing has a similar passage between the pairs of chimney breasts and contains the White Room, which was perhaps a tutor's chamber, the School Room, the Housekeeper's Room, and the Spinning Room which may have been also used as a winter kitchen. The restoration of the

1930's included at the ground floor level the removal of the northwest interior stair, removal of the toilet facilities in the west wing, resetting of doors in the west wing, and the reconstruction of the small service stairway in the east wing.

Main floor:

West wing: A passage is located between the pairs of chimney breasts and has arched niches on either side. The Parlour Closet adjacent to the Parlour was the location of the earlier stairway, now removed. The Library and Library Closet opposite the parlour with its late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century trim, are conjectural designs by architect Kimball. Other trim in the rooms has been repaired or replaced.

Central section: The square plan tray ceilinged Great Hall remains are originally designed with only minor repairs to the full height paneling and the trim. The south and north exterior doors are new and the book-closet doors are restored. Corinthian pilasters on pedestals with carved caps derived from tobacco leaves flank the openings and are fine examples of early classical work in America.

East wing: Similar to the west wing, a passage extends between pairs of chimney breasts and has niches. The Mother's Room, like the Parlour, has late eighteenth or early nineteenth century trim which has been preserved and restored. Between the Dining Room and the adjacent alcove, a seven-foot high archway was constructed from structural evidence. The partition has been moved to the present location and the paneling of the Dining Room chimney breast was designed by architect Kimball from fragmentary pieces of earlier paneling.

Attic: The attic is one large space divided by a modern metal firewall above the elevated level over the Great Hall's tray ceiling.

2. Stairways: Off the passage in the east wing is a narrow stairway with winders which probably was the original interior stairway. Prior to 1943 the stair rose from the ground floor Middle Hall Room. Investigation of the floor structure, however, indicated that the stair was originally entirely within the east wing. Architect Kimball planned the present stair from that evidence. The stairway to the attic was restored in 1935 and replaced a trap door and ladder in the east wing.

At some date after the original construction of the house a larger

stairway was added to provide access from the ground floor to the main floor and was located in the northwest corner of the west wing. That stairway was removed in 1938 after examination of the floor structure.

3. Flooring: At the ground floor in the Brick Rooms brick paving in a typical herringbone pattern was laid over earth fill. The vaults of the cellar support brick paving in the east passage. All the other floors are yellow pine, 4" to 10" in width. The wooden flooring was laid over joists which were replaced by concrete slabs on fill. Old flooring was reused and supplemented during the construction which also included the installation of underfloor ducts for heating. Previously in 1933 and 1937 deteriorated wooden joists over the cellars in the east wing were replaced with concrete slabs. In the Great Hall sagging floor joists were replaced and there was replacement of damaged flooring. The attic flooring is poplar and yellow pine.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Typically the walls and ceilings throughout the house are plastered, except in the attic which is unfinished and in cellars where the walls are whitewashed. The plaster is on split-wood lath. During the restoration work of 1934-38 all damaged plaster walls were restored. All the ceilings were taken down and replastered on metal lath. Damaged plaster ceiling cornices were repaired. The Great Hall is paneled to the full, denticulated entablature of the pilasters which forms the ceiling cornice below the tray ceiling. While most rooms, except the ground floor service rooms and the Parlour Closet have a plaster dado below moulded chair rails, the Parlour has a sunken panel dado with a fluted chair rail similar to the Mother's Room. The Dining Room has a raised panel dado similar in detail to the paneled chimney breasts.
5. Special decorative features, trim: In the ground floor, south-east rooms there is no interior trim on the window and door openings. In the area of brick paving, there is no baseboard. Elsewhere the wood baseboarding has various moulded cap profiles. Chair rail varies throughout the structure from simple beaded boarding in the ground floor rooms to bolection and pedestal types on the main floor. Typically the door and window trim has a double fascia architrave profile except in the Great Hall, where the jambs and heads of the openings are the beaded stiles and rails of paneling, and in several ground floor service rooms, which have plain beaded board trim. The architrave trim in main floor west passage is shouldered and is crossetted in the Parlour. All the rooms of the main floor except the Parlour and Parlour Closet have ceiling cornices. Wood crown mouldings set on a beaded fascia are associated with the older trim and plaster crown mouldings above cavetto bed mouldings

are associated with the later trim. There are no ceiling cornices in the ground floor rooms. The Parlour, Mother's Room, and Dining Room had been redecorated in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The Dining Room and the adjacent alcove were restored in the manner of the original work of 1730. The Parlour and Mother's Room were restored, with only minor repairs, in the Federal style.

7. Hardware: Brass box locks on the doors from the west passage to the Great Hall and from the west passage to the Mother's Room were in good operating condition and were used as a pattern for major locks throughout the main floor. Iron box locks were in place between the Mother's Room and the Nursery and these were used as a pattern for iron box locks on the ground floor and elsewhere. Doors in the Great Hall have large (10") H-hinges with removable brass cover plates. Similar hinges were used on the new south and north doors of the Great Hall. Wrought iron H-L hinges were repaired or replaced on several doors on the ground floor and elsewhere. Iron butt hinges also were used on doors on the ground floor, while brass butt hinges were used on most of the main-floor doors. Inside shutters of the ground floor have wrought iron H-L hinges. Bi-folding shutters on both floors have iron butt hinges.
8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Lighting: the house was originally lighted with wax candles and whale-oil lamps and during the last half of the nineteenth century with kerosene lamps. Electricity was introduced with the first restoration work of 1933, when base outlets were installed. The large brass chandelier of the Great Hall, an eighteenth century design uses candles.
  - b. Originally the house was heated by sixteen fireplaces. The firebox in the main-floor Nursery still retains a cast-iron fireback embossed with the date, 1745, and cherubs. Later, wood stoves were used. In the basement of the reconstructed dependency, the Store, a furnace was installed in 1948 hot piped hot water to air handlers in the south cellar of the east wing. Ducts under the floors of the ground floor and concealed risers in the brick walls elsewhere carry warm air to all the rooms.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting: The mansion faces southward toward the land approach and northward toward the Potomac River. The north-

south axis bears thirteen degrees west of north. To the south there is an approach 1700 foot avenue of tulip poplars. A cleared vista extends northward to the Potomac River.

2. Outbuildings: Four brick, Flemish bond, dependency buildings are located at each corner of the grounds immediately adjacent to the mansion. Typically the southwest building, the Office, and the southeast building, the Kitchen-Laundry are story-and-a-half structures with jerkinhead roofs. Each structure has a corbeled brick cap on a paneled chimney stack which is centrally located on the ridge. Facing the south lawn, each structure has four bays with a low segmentally arched doorway and segmentally arched window openings with sixteen over sixteen light sash. The buildings have simple boxed and moulded cornices. To the north, at the east and west corners, are the one-story northwest School and the northeast Lumber storage buildings. Each has a hipped roof and three bays which face south. The flat arched doorways are flanked by flat arched window openings with sixteen over sixteen light sash. The north dependencies were restored in 1933, as was the southeast kitchen dependency. The adjacent smokehouse, a small structure with a pyramidal roof, was repaired in 1933 and restored in 1948. The southwest dependency was restored in 1936-37, and to the west an identical structure, the Store, was reconstructed on original foundations in 1949-50. West of the Store, the Coach House and Stable were restored in 1936 with a west addition being reconstructed in 1937. An octagon summer house was built on its original foundations north of the east garden in 1934. Two slave quarters were reconstructed on their foundations south of the east garden in 1948.
3. Landscape: The fine gardens of Stratford Hall were known to have existed, but in 1929 little remained of the former east or west gardens except the four large English birches to the east of the mansion. In 1929 the Garden Club of Virginia began the work of restoring the east garden. Landscape architect, Arthur A. Schurtleff, conducted archeological investigations and made preliminary plans. In 1932 landscape architect, Morley Jeffers Williams, prepared the plan and began the planting and the construction of walks and walls. The initial work was completed in 1933. Original sections of brick walls survived in the vicinity of the southeast and southwest dependencies. Other walls were reconstructed on original foundations. Ha-ha walls were restored beyond the south par terre of the mansion and east of the east garden. The walks between the dependencies and the mansion were paved with brick and garden walks were graveled.

The west garden was planned in 1942 by landscape architects, Innocenti and Webel. Work was delayed in it was finally completed in the 1950's. Both gardens are characterized by parterre plantings.

Prepared by: Melvin M. Rotsch  
Architect  
Stratford Project Supervisor  
August 1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in the summer of 1969 in cooperation with the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc. The project was instituted under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey, with Professor Melvin M. Rotsch (Architect, Texas A & M University) as the project supervisor and Student Assistant Architects Dennis W. Jacobs (University of Kansas) and Charles F. Sanders (Tulane University). Jack E. Boucher (HABS) was the project photographer.

The drawings were edited in January and February of 1973 by Rodd L. Wheaton, who also edited the data and photographs, and John A. Burns, Architects, Historic American Buildings Survey.